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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: TOGO: BOKO IN FRANCE

Classified By: CDA Josiah Rosenblatt for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) During a May 6 discussion on Togo with visiting staffdel Flynn, MFA PDAS-equivalent Elisabeth Barbier told Embassy Africa watcher that former Togolese Interior Minister Boko had arrived in France the evening of May 5. Barbier was reluctant to provide details, and said that the GoF would be seeking to avoid publicity on Boko's presence in France. Reminded that the USG had offered to provide an armored vehicle to transport Boko to Ghana, Barbier finally told us that Boko had arrived in France directly from Lome on a non-commercial flight on a plane provided by Germany. Barbier said that Boko would be staying with a French female companion and had been told not to make any public statement.

12. (C) Asked about the formation of a government of national unity, Barbier commented that the "radical" opposition had rejected this option. Pressed on her characterization, Barbier said that the opposition had asked too much of ECOWAS and that UFC leader Gilchrist Olympio's policy was "based on revenge." She lamented that FM Barnier's statements on the elections, intended as an expression of relief that violence had been limited, had resulted in negative media reaction in France. She also noted that the presence of spin doctors like Charles Debbasch and Jean-Luc Maneaud in Togo was also negatively affecting France's image in Togo and in the region generally.

13. (C) Barbier discounted the possibility the AU might engage on Togo. Konare, she said, could say what he liked, but with Nigerian President Obasanjo already engaged in Togo, the AU was unlikely to supplant ECOWAS, particularly as South African President Mbeki was unlikely to involve himself. Looking forward, Barbier said that France would be working with EU partners on pressing the GoT to prepare satisfactory legislative elections in accordance with its 22 commitments to the EU under article 96 of the Cotonou agreement.

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